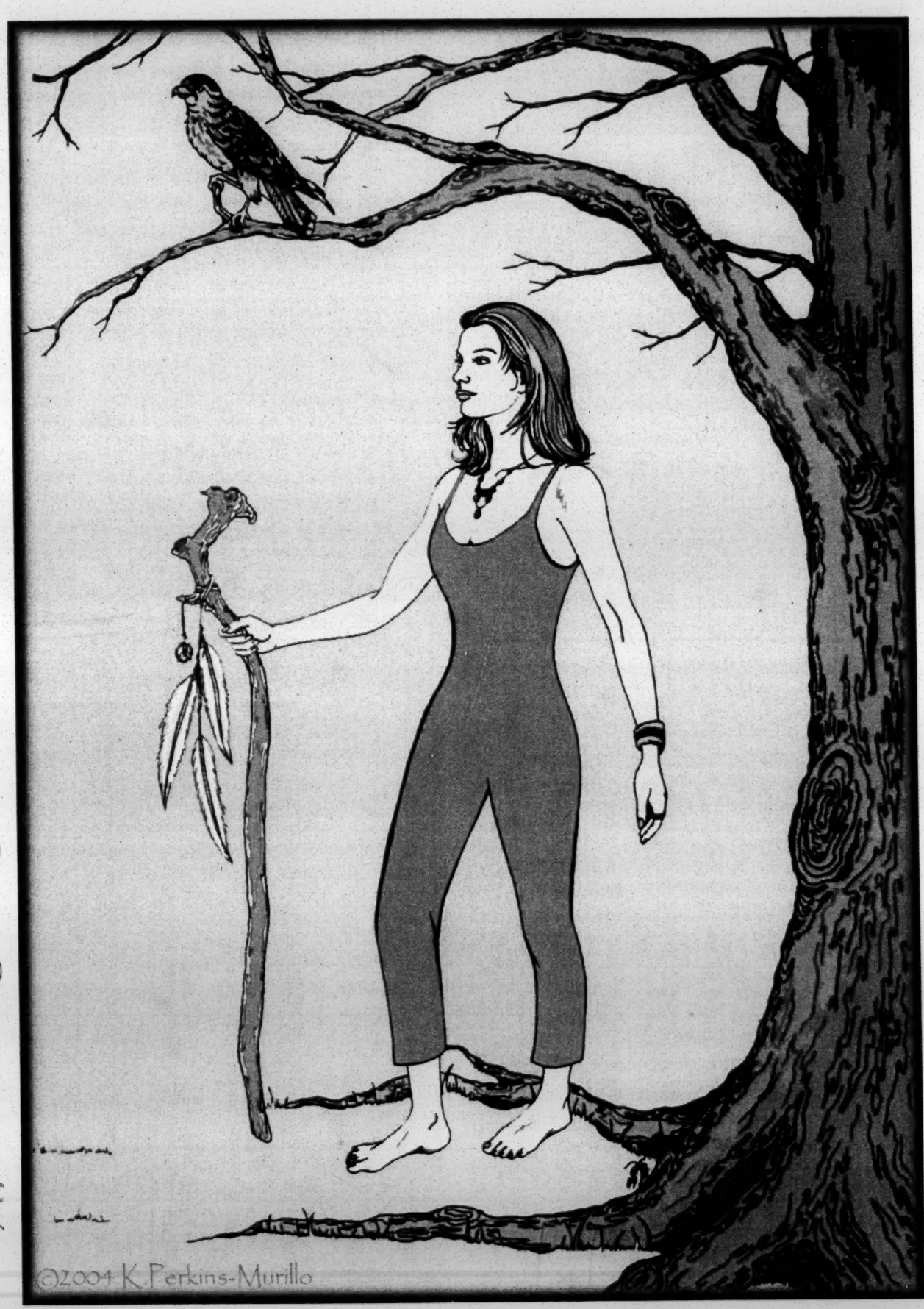
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The Seeker Journal

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✪ Editorial: On the Fringes ✪ The Temple of The Oak ✪
✪ Transitions: Lughnasadh 2004 ✪ Magickal Children and the Summerland ✪
✪ Reluctant Tears ✪ Reporting from the Cauldron ✪

The Seeker Journal • P.O. Box 3326 • Ann Arbor, MI 48106 • (734) 665-3522
seeker@seekerjournal.org • http://seekerjournal.org/

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John M. Morris Ph.D: Executive Editor
Misti Anslin Delaney: Managing Editor
David Burwasar: News Editor
Cather "Catalyst" Steincamp: Online Editor and HTML Guru
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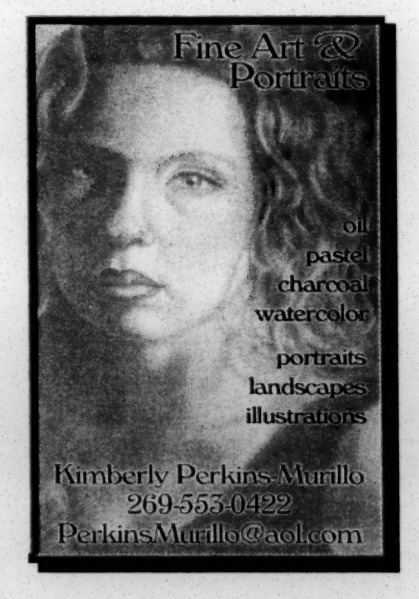
Kimberly Perkins-Murillo is an artist living and working in Southwest Michigan. She is available for commissioned portraits (clients can be local or long distance), images of the realm of faerie and all things magickal, as well as other fine art.

Kim's magickal images are available on merchandise such as t-shirts, mugs, hats, and more. Visit www.cafepress.com/magickalarts and www.cafepress.com/faeriemagick

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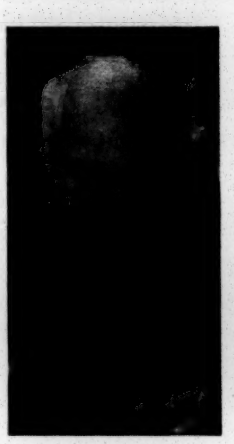


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Editorial

by John M. Morris PhD

On the Fringes



Newsweek recently ran a set of articles on the increasing number of Christian groups that believe the Last Judgment is coming soon. This is the End of Time, when God's chariots will gather up the True Believers and take them to a land of everlasting bliss, while the rest of us are left in chaos and doom. Actually there seem to be a variety of scenarios available, with all sorts of ghastly results for us outsiders.

Anyone who has read the book of Revelation, the last book in the Holy Bible, will recognize these prophesies of a future in which God's judgment falls upon the unrighteous, and the unbelievers are doomed. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse ride across the earth, using their scythes to mow down all of us who don't meet their standards. In actuality, the authors of the Book of Revelation may have been thinking of the Romans as their enemies, so that the actual destruction was to be visited upon those oppressors, but some modern Evangelicals have found contemporary villains to become victims of God's wrath.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been best known for these prophecies of destruction, but, as the *Newsweek* articles make clear, apocalyptic terrors have been gaining ground recently in some of the more conventional churches. Back when I was in theological school, one of the sermons they gave us to study was Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," which gave details of the tortures that would be visited upon those of us who failed to obey God's holy will. It is said that Edwards' congregation was screaming and crying with fear at the horrible punishments they would suffer for their sins. If Edwards was right, there are very few righteous folk among us; almost everybody is a sinner.

Among the Pagans, there are certainly some fierce and angry Gods and Goddesses, although they are rarely like the self-righteous God of the Bible.

Take Sekhmet, the Cat Goddess of the Egyptians. She wasn't at all self-righteous. She just wanted to feast on humankind, and it was her lust for blood (and beer) that finally brought an end to her attacks. Loki, on the other hand, just liked to play tricks on humans. There isn't anything moralistic about Him. Pele, the Hawaiian volcano Goddess, could get very angry, but it was primarily because She didn't like to be disturbed.

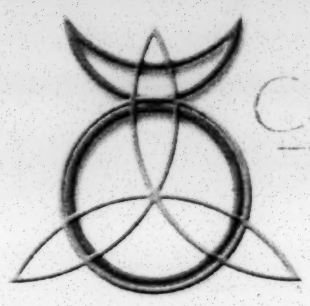
In short, the Pagan Gods and Goddesses don't seem to have been charged with enforcing some kind of a moral code. They are wild, untamed by human notions of morality, unlike the Buddha, for example, whose Noble Truths are supposed to guide our lives.

What was fascinating about the *Newsweek* articles was the number of adult humans who take the Angry God seriously. As the more liberal Christian churches watch their numbers sink ever lower, the Evangelicals are growing like mushrooms on a rainy summer day.

While there is no "official" Pagan view, many neo-Pagans look to an afterlife, in the Summerland, with the opportunity to be reborn to another life. The doctrine of karma is often included, with future lives giving us the chance to counteract any harm we've done in earlier existences. This is not a doctrine, taught by theologians – few of us would trust theologians, who tend to make wildly improbable claims on the basis of no real evidence. Instead, our beliefs about an afterlife are based on our own experience. We travel to the Other World, we talk to our ancestors, we see visions of the world to come.

There is absolutely nothing that we are expected to believe "on faith." Our faith is in the things we've found out for ourselves.

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Skills



It seems to me that Pagans have been misled into believing that our current state of progress is as far as we'll ever get. We're too disorganized, we're too cheap, and we're too antagonistic to ever develop any kind of meaningful infrastructure.

I've heard this said about us from outside the community, which doesn't surprise me-- but you'd think the people inside the community would know better.

Seriously, folks, we've got to stop perpetuating stereotypes about ourselves. Oh, don't get me wrong, many of these statements have their basis in fact. There are a lot of Pagans who don't even want organization, and some of them think that since they don't want it, you shouldn't either. There are Pagans who are truly broke, but if this were true of all of us, then why do vendors at Pagan events bother? Goddess knows that there are a million flavors of antagonistic Pagans, from the Entitlists (who scream oppression if you don't give them their way) to the folks who think that running a coven gives them the expertise and authority to tell every other Pagan on Earth how to run their organizations.

I rant a lot about the people who, in my opinion, are a part of the problem, but I don't talk enough about the people who are part of the solution. In preparation for this column, I checked my archives and realized that not once had I spoken directly of Shea Thomas of the Open Hearth Foundation, who probably knows more about the reality and legality of Pagan organization than anyone else I've worked with. Similarly, I have neglected to praise Kimana LeMaster, whose skills at event planning are highly impressive. (This is seriously remiss of me, when you consider that she planned and performed my handfasting to perfection-- on no budget, with no notice, and with a bride and groom who were probably of no help at all.) I've never said a word about Eric Eldritch and his group facilitation skills-- despite his masterful impromptu lecture on conflict resolution at the Washington-Baltimore Area Pagan Leadership Conference. For that matter, I've never taken a moment to talk about Drema Baker, or... or...this could go on for weeks.

For every excusethat the pessimists provide for not getting anything done, there's a skill that will compensate and allow progress. Of course, we aren't all born with these skills. Heck, most of the people who have these skills weren't born with them. They learned them, and so can we. Until now, about the only way that you can gain these skills has been through formal education, direct experience, or by working with the people who have them.

Fortunately, there is now another option. Four organizations-- Carolina Spirit Quest, The DC Radical Faeries, The Open Hearth Foundation, Inc. and PagaNet, Inc.-- have banded together to put on a Pagan Leadership Skills Conference in Richmond, VA, with tracks focusing on group facilitation, event coordination, legal, finance, and library skills.

Of course, any event like this is a gamble, but I'm betting that it will pay off in spades, particularly since the people who put it together include the people I was raving about earlier. One leader can change the face of an entire community, and his or her experience will rub off on others. The impact from something like this could very well permanently change the development of the Pagan Community, even if it only happens once.

Even indirectly, I've learned some very interesting things from these talented Pagans. For example, did you know that a Pagan organization that raises money for a specific purpose (for example, a Pagan Community Center, a defense fund, or an animal shelter) cannot legally use that money for any other purpose? It's fairly obvious when you think about it-- I mean, if I donated money for a Community Center and it ended up being spent on a festival, I'd probably be pretty upset. But I didn't think about it until I talked to Shea and gained some benefit from his

law degree.

I promised myself I wasn't going to spend two thirds of my vacation time this year working on my Pagan activism-- but I realized I couldn't miss this opportunity. To give you an idea, my wife-- normally a big booster of me spending my vacations on actual recreation-- looked at me funny when I told her I was going to have to do it. She was just astounded that I put thought into it rather than just signing up. In hindsight, so am I.

No, it's not free, and depending on your income, you might not consider it cheap, either. It's probably a harder sell if you don't know these people, as well. However, if you're interested in working on the future of the Pagan Community, I highly recommend taking advantage of this incredible opportunity (although that's probably fairly obvious by now).

For more information, or to make a reservation, visit http://www.paganleadership.org.

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Transitions
by
Bruce T. Calvert

Lughnasadh, 2004

The Empty Nest



Lughnasadh is the "First Harvest". The time when our ancestors were busy cutting and winnowing the grain that they sowed this past spring. In Europe it was wheat. In North Africa it might have been millet. In Asia it was rice. In the Americas it was maize. (What we North Americans incorrectly call corn.)

In our own lives we can equate this to the time when our children go off to college or move out on their own for the first time. We have spent the spring and summer of our lives raising our children. Now we see the results of that nurturing as our children start out on their own lives. A "First Harvest" if you will, of the time and effort we have invested in raising them.

But what do we do now? The kids are gone. We don't have to worry about school schedules, or after school activities, or anything having to do with our children's busy lives. We are no longer needed...

Now just one minute! That's the wrong way to think of this. Rather, we should be looking forward to this time of our lives as a time to concentrate on ourselves for a change. Just like our ancestors did each year at this time.

How's that? Well think about it for a minute. Each year our ancestors would invest a huge amount of time and effort to raise the crops. Each spring they had to clear the fields by hand, plow them, and sow the seed. Each summer they would spend day after day weeding, guarding, and watering. (Remember, most of them had to carry the water to the fields by hand in buckets!) By the time the harvest came, they

were exhausted, and yet the work still went on. They had to cut the crops by hand with scythes or sickles, thresh the sheaves to open the heads and release the grains, and then winnow the harvest to separate the grain from the chaff. And what was the payback? A time of celebration because they knew that their hard work had insured a bounty that would help to see them through the coming winter.

That's the way we need to view these "Empty Nest" years: as a time of celebration in which to enjoy the fruits of our labors. We have time now to spend on ourselves. The kids are off on their own and, hopefully, no longer financially dependent on us. We have fewer expenses and more spendable cash. This is the time in our lives, for some of us the first time, when we can actually do the things we want to do. The kinds of things that we just didn't have the time or the money to do while the kids were still around.

What kinds of things? Well how about...

- *Taking a ballroom dance class with your partner.* You both used to go dancing a lot when you were dating. Now's your chance to do something together and rekindle that flame. But don't stop with just the Foxtrot and the waltz. There's also tap, and salsa, and tango, and the Marengo, and... and... and...

- *Take that vacation that you've been dreaming about.* A Caribbean cruise can be very relaxing. Or if that's not your cup of tea, how about a camping trip to the redwood forest in California? Better yet, buy an RV and do an "around the country" camping trip where you try to spend at least one night in every single National Park.

- *What about a new hobby*? Invest in that potter's wheel and try your hand at throwing some pots. Very therapeutic! And if you get good at it, you can make a complete service for 12 as a wedding gift for your daughter. Think of the money you'll save!

- Pottery not your thing? Maybe carpentry is. Of course you will need to go out and buy some good tools. Let's see, you'll need a table saw, and a router, and a skill saw, and a power planer, and... and... and...

- *You've always had dreams of being a public servant.* Why not volunteer to help out at the local senior center? Or how about running for office? You can start out as a City Councilman, but why stop there? Heck, with a little luck you can make it to the State Senate or even farther! Do I hear "Hail to the Chief" playing in the background?

Now please don't get me wrong. I am not advocating that you go crazy. I'm sure you've all heard of the "Midlife Crisis". Well that is definitely not what I'm talking about here. Far too many folks, not knowing what to do with themselves once their kids are gone, just plain go nuts. Running off and spending all your money on a fancy sports car, or on a full-length mink coat, or on some new fad or hobby, is just foolish. Our ancestors didn't grind up the entire harvest and make hundreds of loaves of bread that would just go bad before they could be eaten. No, they stored the harvest for the coming winter. We need to do the same. We need to make sure that our retirement is secure, and that we will have enough to "see us through the winter".

On the other hand, celebrating harvest festivals does have a long time tradition:

- In ancient Greece the goddesses Ceres, Demeter, and Persephone were celebrated at this time of year.

- The Minoans celebrated the grain harvest in a ritual called Bull Dancing. The priestesses would vault over a sacred bull by grabbing its horns and leaping over its back. This ritual honored both the female aspect of the priestesses and the male aspect of the Sacred Bull, thereby creating a complete fertility symbol. Perfect for a harvest celebration.

- The Peruvians hold a parade and everyone gets dressed up in their best clothes. As the village elders proceed through town, they put small handfuls of corn, a

staple of the rural diet, in everyone's pocket. No one knows when this tradition started, but most agree that it is ancient. And during a harvest festival it is symbolic of plenty and wealth.

- Native North Americans always celebrated the Corn Grandmother at the Festival of the Green Corn. They also left the last corn stock standing in each field so that the Corn Grandmother would have someplace to live until next year.

- In India, where cotton was more important at this time of year than wheat or other grains, they celebrated the harvest by honoring the first cotton boll to burst. It was collected from the fields and honored as the Cotton Mother. It was symbolically fed, ritually honored, and kept nearby until the next harvest when it was burned amid prayers of thanksgiving.

We need to follow the example of our ancestors. After spending the spring and summer working hard to plant and raise the crops, they stored up the harvest for the hard times to come. But they took the time to celebrate their good fortune and give thanks for the harvest.

So go ahead, have some fun. Celebrate your new free time. Enjoy the fruits of your labors. Just don't go overboard. And remember to be thankful.

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Magickal Children and the Summerland



My uncle , who was 93, made his journey to the Summerland recently. He was my father figure, my father having crossed over 24 years ago.

My family sat together at the wake remembering holidays spent drinking his homemade wine, remembering his garden, laughing at his antics that totally embarrassed us as they welcomed boyfriends and girlfriends into the family, and his unconditional gifts of support and love. As we shared those memories, we tightened our bonds and renewed our dedication to family.

It was late on the second day of the wake that we experienced our most profound moment. It was not when the elders came to wail at the casket to chase evil spirits away that might hinder his gentle and peaceful passage. It wasn't when we heard his brother was having a prayer service in Italy at the exact time we were having one here in America. It wasn't when we all realized the room was filled with his beloved pink roses.

It was when his small great-grandchildren entered the room and walked to his side.

In this series of articles we have explored ways in which we can help our children understand and connect with our path of spirituality. We have taken a trip through the wheel of the year and sought ways to guide our children to grow and learn.

But, as I sat there with my own children and my cousins' children, I began to think about how we handle the subject of death with our children.

Birth is such a joyous event that we don't hesitate to talk about it and to prepare our children to witness it. We want them to embrace the beginning of new life.

But, do we help them understand and accept death?

In days of old, when family members died, they were laid out in the home. Family and friends would come to the home and "pay their respects" to the deceased who was laid out right in the middle of the parlour[1]. Every man, woman, and child was there comforting each other and accepting that this was a part of life. The cycle of life continued. Now, we take our loved one to a different kind of home where only adults usually go. We tell ourselves, and them, that it might be too difficult for them. We say it might upset them to see the body. I think, if handled with love and honesty, our children can handle more than we think they can.

Our children are more in tuned with the ethereal than most of us. Along the way we lost, along with our innocence, some of our vision beyond the physical plane. Perhaps allowing our children to say that final goodbye to a loved one wouldn't upset them too much. Perhaps it would upset us too much. Most of us are not accustomed to see children at a funeral. Maybe we weren't allowed to attend when we were young so we don't have the tools to help our children learn from the experience. But, listen to parents discussing the passing of a loved one who was close to their children and you may hear about experiences their children had that may have involved a visit or a dream.

When my uncle's great grandchildren entered the room, their parents slowly made their way up front. They stopped to say hello to family. They took a moment to look at the flowers and when the children, ages 2 through 10, asked to go see their "Papa" they were taken up front. Each child was allowed to bring something special they wanted "Papa" to take with him. They each placed the special object lovingly in the casket. They were allowed to stay as long as they wanted to. They were held in their parents' arms or stood hand in hand. Each child was allowed a "remember when" time to share something special they remembered about this special man. I was so proud to see how comfortable my cousins were and how they smiled with each remembrance and with each kiss blown to the man who was our eldest elder, the father of our family.

I share this story to spark discussion in your own family. What will you do when someone you love passes through the veil? How will you explain it to your children? What age appropriate words will you use? How are you preparing your children for this life experience?

The cycle of life is all around us. Why not take these opportunities to relate what is happening all around them to what happens to all life? As we go through the wheel of the year, take advantage of the changing seasons to draw comparisons between the birth of spring, summer's life and growth, fall's death, winter's time of rest and reflection, and then spring's rebirth. Along with the Sabbats, follow the birth, life, death, and rebirth of the God.

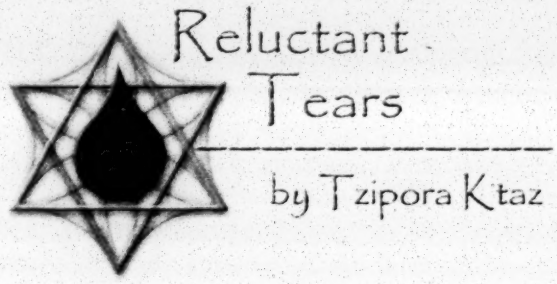
Many children experience the death of a pet or may see an animal on the side of the road who was hit by a car. These can be teachable moments that ignite discussion and give us an opportunity to open the door to issues we don't usually talk about. Our child's best friend may move away and to them this is a type of death. Discuss how their friendship was born. Share how it grew and intensified. Allow them to share the sadness they feel now that their friend is gone. Use age appropriate words and descriptions to help them understand your concept of the Summerland. When my children were young I compared it to a foggy morning when we see the deer in the backyard slowly disappear into the fog. They are still there, within the foggy mist, but we cannot see them. To me, the Summerland (or whatever you may call the place of rest and reflection after death) is not "up there" or "beyond this". To me, it coexists with us, yet on another plane of existence. How can you describe your beliefs? What can you compare it to? How can you describe it or what happens so your child can grasp your vision of death?

Your children take their cues from you. They will learn to deal with saddness and loss and not

[1] *That room came to be known as the "living room" at about the same time as death was moved out of our homes and into "funeral parlors". TSJ*

to fear what is on the other side of the veil if your reaction to it is comfortable and without fear. Do your own inner work and your children will have positive models to take with them into adulthood. They will also be able to give a special gift to their own children, the ability to embrace life and respect death.

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Reluctant Tears

By Tzipora Ktaz

"Thou art Goddess."

The Priest anointed her, being careful not to remove the make-up covering her bruises. Bruises he had placed on her only the night before.

It has been two years since I last had to perform that ritual. Two years since the last time I was the victim of domestic violence. Two years since I last had to find the awkward excuses for strange cut on the inside of my lip, or creatively explain away a loud "argument" from the night before. Two years.

My new partner asked me if my abuser was still here. Asked me if I knew how far I had come. "No."

Those events still live in the shadows. Still haunt my dreams and cloud my ability to think some days. Though physically away from me, me abuser is still a very real part of my life.

The acceptance of what had happened, the tears that would offer the healing needed to move beyond, have been slow in their coming. My mentor at our local shelter for battered women assures me I'm doing fine.

Some days I doubt her sanity.

Every fifteen seconds a woman is battered in the USA. That is a statistical abomination. It accounts for reported physical abuse, nothing more. It does not reflect what happens when a victim is terrorized, humiliated or bullied. It does not come anywhere near the reality of magickal threats. It cannot. The numbers would be too high. It would make the Burning Times and the Holocaust combined pale. Yet it is real.

We practice magick. We build walls of blue light around ourselves to keep out those things we do not wish to have near us. We send each other positive energy to keep away those things that have no place in our lives. Healing magick is offered without a thought, beyond "*let me help you.*"

But those spells are easily broken with a slap to the face. Or a hand choking a neck. Or worse.

There are no spells that will prevent an act such as rape. No chants printed in our local newsletters, no tapes that will teach us the secret mantra to block a chair being destroyed inches from us. No oils sold at the local occult shop to filter out the violence. And even fewer chants for healing the wounds.

Fewer still are the safe places inside this Pagan Community for a victim to go and be heard. We, as a community, say that we venerate the Goddess, revere the God. If this is true then why are so many of our women being battered? How can we, who claim to have awareness beyond the mundane, who claim to be psychic, be so blind to the truth?

The answer is not all that complex. We are not different from the rest of society. It wasn't that long ago that we acknowledged that we had the same kinds of substance abuse problems as the world at large. We offered healing to victims of rape & incest. In both cases, with open hearts and minds. No accusations of the victims having asked for the abuse, the addict having carefully plotted their addictions.

So why in the face of domestic violence do we turn away?

Perhaps the reason is because the violence is being generated inside our community and it is far too painful for any of us (including the victims) to face.

Domestic violence is different and far removed from other forms of abuse. A victim of domestic violence has to face the abuse as well as the reality that they chose their partner. No matter how many times they are reminded of that, no one

enters into a relationship with the thought of "*now I'm going to be abused. What a relief.*" It doesn't remove the feeling of failure in having made what now appears to have been a poor choice.

Worse still is that when a victim points at an abuser from inside the community, they are risking harming the community as a whole. "Nice witches don't beat each other. It's bad magick."

But "nice witches" do indeed beat each other. "Nice witches" do abuse each other. And all the magickal chants and potions in the world will not protect the victim from falling blows.

So what can we do? What healing can be offered?

For the healing to begin, we have to accept that domestic violence does happen here, in this community. Victims must be believed. They must be given a safe space to find the strength to heal. In their own time, not ours.

We do not need to create our own shelters. There are shelters that exist in the world already. We do not need to create tribunals to hear the cases and judge the truth. We do not need to council the partners into healing the relationship.

We need to learn to listen. We need to hear the truth, and act on it. Abuse must not be tolerated or accepted. Abusers must be given a place to find their own healing; to offer less would be inhuman. Within that space, abusers must be removed from other potentially abusive situations. We must be certain the victims are safe from further harm. That must come first.

More importantly, we must look each other in the eye and say:

"*Thou art Goddess. Thou art God.*" And really mean it.

POST SCRIPT: Since the original writing of this article I have become aware of two more women in our community who have been severely abused. One victim received a fractured skull. The other victim, having been beaten with a bat, required extensive medical attention (some 73 staples and 49 stitches, I believe was the number). In both cases, the abusers are known figures in the community. Both women have sought legal assistance and are pursing their cases.

Gwyddion once wrote, "*We won't wait any longer. We are stronger than before.*"

May those words guide other victims to their strength to get to safety. And my they give this community the strength it will need to help itself heal.

For more information on what you can do to help stop domestic violence in your area contact the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 303-839-1852, or your local shelter.

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***Editor's note**: the phone number has been verified and updated using the NCADV web page.*

The Temple of The Oak
by Drecora & Hawthorne

The Temple of The Oak

By Drecora and Hawthorne

Have you ever had a dream where you were able to be completely open about who you are and what your beliefs are? Where everyone around is, at the very least, pagan friendly and you could live peacefully in an atmosphere where there was no fear of persecution? Everyone was able to have their own opinion and own beliefs yet live together focused on the things in common rather than their differences. Working hand in hand to help each other rather than to harm.

We had that dream too, but rather than just leaving it as a dream we are making it our reality.

The questions we must ask are: Where is our community and where is our safe haven? If you look at every other religion out there, each has it's own community, it's own inner structure. We know many pagans have thought about this, talked about it, and even tried to do something about it, yet many groups have fallen apart due to inner struggles and a lack of foundation.

When you're building a house, you first need a strong foundation with which to build. That is the core belief of the Temple of the Oak. No matter what each individual pagans belief structure consists of, if you break it down we are all based on the same foundations. We as Pagans\Wiccans may not have one book that gives us our creed, such as a bible does, but we do all stem from the same basic foundation. Therefore, we at the Temple of the Oak begin teaching with the basic foundation through a method we call Triangulation. To find the core of any one thing you must look at no less than three different sources of it and find what they all have in common.

Our plan is simple, yet it will be so much larger than any one person or project. We will build a fully functioning Pagan\Wiccan community that includes but is not limited to: a place to worship; a safe haven; witches helping witches to build something larger than ourselves; clergy for weddings, funerals, wiccanings\ baptisms, work within the hospitals, and counsel; a team of healers that can offer a multitude of things to the public, from Reiki to herbs; a place to live and thrive; networking; larger festivals filled with bands, crafters, speakers, and worship; help for those in need to provide not just the physical needs in life, but the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs as well; legal help and a safety net; and finally a place to belong where people are given 'a window' instead of a closed door... where we are inclusive not exclusive... and where we are a truly 'harm none' society.

Many groups are built stemming from crisis, however we feel that this is not necessary. We stem from strong foundation and a strong drive for true community where problems will arise yet by working together we can actually help and make a difference. We are a group of individuals with varying backgrounds, skills, and beliefs, therefore creating a community that has knowledge in many practices, and we look forward to learning more every day.

Knowledge is power and masses can make things better for all.

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Contact information:

Email: templeoftheoak@hotmail.com

Phone: (810) 564 - 9997; ask for Drecora or Hawthorne



Reviews

By John M. Morris Ph.D.

MAYA HEATH. *MAGICAL OILS BY MOONLIGHT.* FRANKLIN LAKES (NJ): NEW PAGE BOOKS, 2004. 224 PP., $14.99.

This is a fascinating collection of magical potions and incense formulas, including oils, herbs, and crystals that you can use for magic, "The Act of Creating Reality." What makes this new book especially valuable is the way it goes beyond a set of recipes to include a full spectrum of magical workings. You'll find that your understanding of magic must include an understanding of the powers needed to carry out your will, not merely the repetition of a formula like "As I will, so mote it be."

For example, the author gives a discussion of the astrological influences that may affect your ritual, supporting or interfering with your chosen goals. By selecting the phases of the moon and the positions of the planets, you can gain their help in whatever project you're undertaking.

One section that I found particularly interesting described herb and crystal mixtures for use during an eclipse of the moon. This is a good time for past-life regressions and soul retrievals. After a discussion of the magic involved, she provides a recipe for past-life regression oil, using mugwort for vision clarity, myrrh for spiritual protection during the process, and other herbs for strength and courage. She also suggests crystals to assist in the working: amazonite and ruby in zoisite. What makes this recipe most valuable is the author's full discussion of the reasons for each choice of ingredients.

Magical Oils by Moonlight provides a wealth of information and guidance for any of us planning magical workings using oils, crystals, and po-

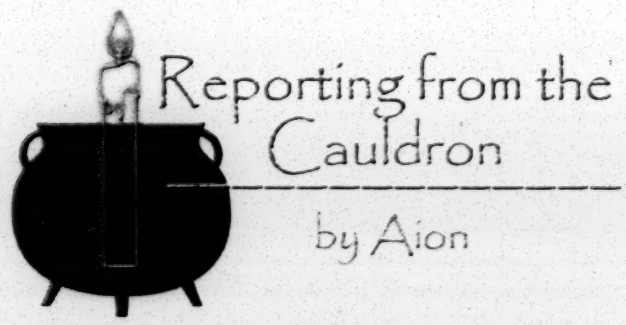
tions.

BRONWEN AND FRANS STIENE. *THE REIKI SOURCEBOOK.* WINCHESTER (UK): O BOOKS, 2003. 366 PP., $19.95.

Reiki is a form of hands-on healing based on Japanese traditions and greatly modified in the West during the past century. Basically, the healer guides the reiki energy, under direction of the reiki guides, to precisely those areas that require healing. Healing is available to animals and plants, as well as to humans. Although we often use a massage table, reiki is not a form of massage, since the healer's hands need not even touch the person being healed.

Although there are dozens of instructional books available - my favorite would be Diane Stein's *Essential Reiki* - the Stein's recent book emphasizes the history and the many variants of this complex healing system.

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Reporting from the Cauldron

by Aion

In Black and White

As I stood over the cauldron stirring and observing the contents within, I looked into it's depths asking for some inspiration to share with you. This generalized topic popped out, so here we go again, for the sake of open discussion and or enlightenment.

In my last installment I discussed a pagan convention and some of the tenets that might be considered a part of being pagan. I did this to show possibilities to explore.

I need to take things apart and study their "properties" to understand them, first from my perspective and then I try to go back over the opinions of the author of the piece and the references or credibility of the discussion in this situation. The Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

This process can become significant and never ending. As some of these authors or creators are no longer on this side. They have passed out of an individual physical incarnation that we are viewing them from, so we must resort to information other than their own spoken words. We are left to make assessments, often based on things they left behind or by others who claim to have studied or known them. Yet, in what form or substance did these memories or messages remain after the originator's physical death?

What distinctions do we make between the life and death of something? Is it on the physical reality of material substances that we assign credibility? And if so, then what about such subjects as:

Faith

Keep the faith, have faith, don't lose faith, be ever faithful.

What do these phrases mean? How do we define faith, what is this faith, where does it come from? Is one's faith the same as one's religion? Within this religion/faith are there then beliefs/tenets that need to be determined, agreed on, or conveyed in order to belong or be accepted? Then who decides on these tenets or beliefs? Do the believers have the right to choose this faith, or is it predetermined for them somehow? If so, is it a part of their lineage, their heritage, or their destiny? And if so, how is this faith conveyed to the participants? Is it a learned or given thing or do you just have it? How did the founders of a particular faith communicate the beleifs to it's followers? Do they use words like those used when describing or defining the physical body's existence or beliefs, words that are descriptive through reliance on our awareness of substance or form? What are the constructs of this whole theology on faith? In fact what is faith?

Possibly a discussion of how the basic concepts of faith, or anything or that matter, were first arrived at and how they are being used,understood, and obeyed among those considering themselves a member of this faith. This would be done so that those interetsed in working within a unit or sect can not only do so , but

can do it by reaching an agreement on how the words of the concept are to be understood and used when descibing the religion/faith in this particular situation. Ideally then a particular faith/religion is invented or established within this order and will be accepted or followed by its members in order to be compliant within a certain societial classification, or distinction which has been made and agreeded on with others for this faith. Mutual consent syndrom?

HUH? So, we first must define faith and then distinquish one faith from another? So what distinquishes us from others? Maybe if one would first describe one's own concept of faith on paper and then have another person do the same and compare these. When doing so the similarities and the differences will be noticed and then the intended participants can determine where and if there there are differences and similiarities that are obvious. Noting the possible areas where these are might help to determine or see that these differences can be complimentarty to each other. Or are they in such direct conflict with each other, they might be "un-movable" and therefore just left as such. How can this data be made profitable to the faith seeker?

There might have been several catagories that the participants had utilized in their descriptive accounts of faith. This might involve such as professional position, educational background, gender, sexual orientation, ethic background, country of birth, age, financial stability or limits, physical limitations, mental limitations, sports favorites, music perferences, and as the lists grows (and may become the joy of behaviorial scientists), it does show how either exacting or anal retention the list might be. Like if you are looking for the exact match, then look no further.. it is within you, however if you are interested in seeing how someone else can teach you someway other than your own and you are open to the challenge we have an opposite. The other..... that is a comparison.

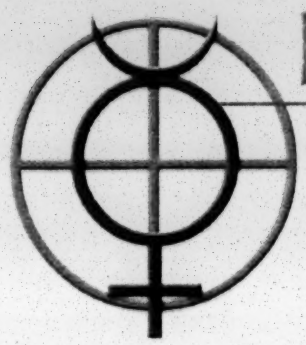
This brings us to the ever ending discussion about what is a pagan and or the right way to be a pagan or which faith is the real pagan one. Could this be discussed as suggested above.....a complying of the tenants of your idea of pagan and those of others which you are involved or associated with (or would like to be) and their "faith" in paganism. I have heard the terms "fuff bunny" pagan, neopagan, heathen, druid, astrua, santeria, celtic, witches, and others. The assigning of words to express a faith or belief held by various people from numerous backgrounds. There are numerous situations where these words can come to an agreement as to what they are trying to express but they might use different terms to express them. Or even the same term means a differnt thing accoring to the orgin of the belief.

There is a book I read some time ago titled "The Alphabet Versus the Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image." , which discusses the change in the mental process when we as humans moved into a society that functioned with words instead of symbols. A interesting note is that this book is written by a medical doctor (Dr. Leonard Shlain, M.D., a laproscopic surgeon) who has a educational, professional background in the scientific fields of study and displine but brings to light the effects of this change from other than the strict medical theology.

So maybe it is possible to wear more than one hat or have one than one type of faith in your life, so is your faith pagan, or are there tenants of being pagan than you put your faith into and that is how do you decide.

let's discuss.....

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In the News

with Dave Burwasser

In the News

State Comptrollers Define Religion In Texas

Deny tax exemption to Pagans, Ethical Culture, Unitarian Universalists

Texas Comptroller Carolyn Keeton Strayhorn has denied tax exempt status to Whispering Star Clan/Temple of Ancient Wisdom, a group of Witches in Copperas Cove; the Red River Unitarian Universalist church in Dennison; North Texas Church of Freethought, a group of atheists and agnostics, in Carrollton; and a New Age group in Bastrop, according to a copyrighted story by RA Dyer in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and put out on the Knight-Ridder wire service. Former Comptroller John Sharp had previously withheld status from Ethical Culture Fellowship of Austin.

The various reasons given were that the organizations did not have a single system of beliefs; did not believe in a God, gods or supreme being; or (in the case of the Witches and New Agers) did not hold public services.

The Ethical Culturists have taken the Comptroller's Office to court. The Texas Court of Appeals, Third District, and the Texas Supreme Court have both ruled against the state in that case. The state's only choices now are to comply, appeal to the US Supreme Court (a fairly feckless route, since its likeliest response would be to refuse jurisdiction, leaving the Texas Supreme Court decision standing), or risk being found in contempt.

After the UUs showed every sign of being ready to do the same, Strayhorn reversed her decision and granted exemption to the Red River UU church, according to a Star-Telegram story by Jay Root.

At press time we do not know the status of the Whispering Star Clan/Temple of Ancient Wisdom.

Bob Barr's Back -- Kerr Cuhulain

You remember former US Representative Bob Barr, who objected to the Army providing chaplains, an altar and worship space to Pagans in the military at Fort Hood. Pioneer out-of-the-broom-closet Pagan cop Kerr Cuhulain has sent out a heads-up that Barr is at it again in a column in the Washington Times, trying to tie both Wiccans and gays in the military to the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. This is an insult to the many Wiccans serving honorably in the armed forces, and simply incoherent about gays.

Officers Of Avalon

Kerr Cuhulain's Beltaine letter reports that he is negotiating with Llewellyn Worldwide about publishing an updated version of his path-breaking first book, The Law Enforcement Guide to Wicca. The original publisher, Horned Owl Publications, is a one-man operation that is thinking about retirement from the business. If the deal goes through, Kerr plans to donate royalties to Officers of Avalon, the professional Pagan police organization he founded.

Kerr also plans to mount his lexicon of occult terms, with some 12,775 entries with 775 illustrations and 43 tables, on the Officers of Avalon web site. The lexicon is an important source of correctives to disinformation on the Web arising from self-appointed "occult crime experts" but it appeals to too small a market to interest a publisher. This would be a big step toward Kerr's intent to make the Officers of Avalon web site a premier source of accurate information on Pagan spirituality for law enforcement.

School Found Not Negligent In Wiccan Girl's Suicide

Wiccan seventh grader Tempest Smith of Lincoln Park (Michigan) Middle School killed herself in early 2001 after years of teasing by fellow students about her religion. He mother brought suit against school officials who had stood by and let this go on. The suit alleged gross negligence, violation of Tempest's constitutional right to an education without being harassed, and violation of civil rights in ignoring religious dis-

crimination against her.

The trial court threw out the constitutional claim, and the Michigan Appeals Court has now ruled school personnel immune to the negligence claim, according to a story in the Detroit Free Press.

The civil rights claim will now go to trial.

School Board Bars Middle School Student Pagan Club

The Okaloosa County School Board have adopted a membership requirement to bar a 12-year-old girl from organizing a Pagan student club at Max Bruner Jr. Middle School in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, according to an Associated Press story. The school has student Christian clubs.

Officials at the school originally told her she would need 200 signatures in support to form the club. The School Board trimmed that down to a requirement that any club have at least five members and a faculty sponsor.

The American Civil Liberties Union has taken the position that any numerical requirement is a violation of federal law. The student's parents may take further action. They previously protested "under God" in the Pledge of Allegience, a matter now before the US Supreme Court out of California.

More Festival Politics In Salem

Salem's Annual Psychic Fair and Witchcraft Expo, planned by the first Witch to be on an interfaith council, has been turfed by the Mayor in favor of a presentation of "Cry Innocent," a play about the 1692 Witch Trials. Salem City Council has asked the Mayor to reconsider, an advisory position only.

Salem formerly had a Marketing and Tourism Bureau in charge of the disputed venue, Old Town Hall, which is now in the charge of the Planning Department. Several councilors urged restoration of the Bureau to relieved overworked Planning from this burden.

Your *In the News* editor used to track municipal politics for a hobby, and can assure you that there's more to this story than ever makes the papers.

It's an old trick to displace a politically inconvenient activity by giving its time and space to a unobjectionable but politically harmless substitute. From our previous coverage in this column, it's clear the public celebration of Salem's heritage has been the center of political struggle for several years.

Dateline: United Kingdom

A pre-Christian stone circle in Cornwall will be restored by archaeologists. Three of the Nine Maidens' nine stones have fallen over as a result of mining activity, and will be set aright in time for summer. The name derives from a Christian myth that nine maidens broke the Sabbath by dancing on Sunday and were turned to stone.

Three wigwams made of tree branches in the Pebrey forest of South Wales have been flattened by officials after reports of dancing around campfires and possibly gunfire. Suspicions of "drug and witchcraft activities" led to the demolition, though no evidence of drug use was cited.

Sounds like a sinister conspiracy to have a good time.

Dateline: Greece

Greek Pagans, worshippers of the Olympic gods and goddesses, are impatient with the glacial pace at which the Greek state is processing (or stalling) their application to be recognized as an official religion under 1981 human rights legislation. They claim to be up against an increasingly vociferous Greek Orthodox Church, which nominally speaks for 97% of Greeks.

The Olympians (who are cheesed off at the commodification of what they regard as their Olympics) generally meet in secular places, and occasionally sneak into old holy places for unsanctioned observances. Their ultimate goal is permission to worship openly at the Parthenon.

Southern Hemisphere News

The mayor of suburban Casey, in the **Australian** state of Victoria, has avoided a lawsuit from the local Pagan Awareness Network by recanting earlier statements that local Witches are evil, reports the Herald Sun.

Rob Wilson still faces an action before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal from a transgender Witch he outed as a City Council member as part of a political campaign. Established civil rights lawyers are upset at the use of

scarce public Legal Aid funds for the case, but the Victoria Attorney General had declared recently adopted laws against religious vilification are for all Victorians, including "witches, magicians and sorcerers."

Vandalism at two Anglican churches in the **Seychelles Islands** has aroused suspicion that consecrated material stolen from one of them may be used in occult practices. The story connects the two incidents, one involving a broken cross and the other the theft, in the minds of the commending Anglican clergy, but reports no physical evidence linking the two.

The practice of gris-gris, referred to by an Anglican Bishop as "black magic," is reportedly widespread in the nominally Christian island nation, although it is against the law. Seychellois authorities might take a leaf from Australian lawbooks.

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P. O. Box 3326
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

seeker@seekerjournal.org
http://seekerjournal.org/
(734) 665-3522

In Honour of the once every 102 years, Venus Eclipse, Isle of Avalon, Royal Oak's leader in metaphysics, welcomes Linda Newman, as Staff Astrologer to offer In House Sessions.

Rev. Linda Newman is a 3rd generation Astrologer, Mystic Student and Wholistic Wellness Practitioner. She is well known, as a veteran of Metro Detroit multi media, radio, tv and print media. She has been the Staff Astrologer at WNIC, WDTX, WDFX, WCAR and WPON, as well as, the Tel Max Network nationwide. The Great Bear Society named her a "Walks Far Woman" for her dedication to the sacred hoop. The National Association of Female Executives sighted her, for her deep commitment to excellence and her ability to bring Spirituality to the workplace. After a Medicine Journey to Wounded Knee she founded MotherPeace Drum, which meets at Royal Oak Unity Church and tours every summer. The Detroit News said of her,"If our study of Great Lakes area metaphysicians were the Freedom Festival Fireworks, Rev. L. Newman would be the Grand Finale." Visions said of her, "Rev. Newman has the insight of Sylvia Brown, the soul of Mother Theresa and the mouth of Joan Rivers. Each of her presentations is a true blend of joy, wit, and wisdom."

Services offered are Tarot, Astrology, Palmistry, Numerology, Dream Interpretation, Chromotherapy, and Experiential Shamanism. For mini readings (half hour sessions) her suggested tools are Tarot and Astrology (Astro Dice/Psychometry,) since they offer volumes of personal information in a short session.

Please note Astrological Charts and Reports require 48 hours to prepare. Data needed, Name, Date of Birth, Time of Birth, City, State and County of Birth. If Birth time is not available Noon will be used.

Private Sessions Available At Isle of Avalon
Tuesday & Thursday from 3PM to Close.
Weekend Sessions By Appointment.

For more information : 248-336-8228



Bulletin Board

While we believe listings on our bulletin board to be correct at the time of publication, you would do well to check with the sponsors before traveling any great distance to listed events.

To list your event free (100 words or less), contact *The Seeker Journal* (seeker@seekerjournal.org). Please specify: type of event, date and time, location, and contact information. **Contact information must be provided.**

Classes

Class	Day/Time	Description	Location	Contact
Earth Centered Traditions	Second and Fourth Mondays	Eclectic Pagan and Earth-centered spirituality group offering group study, workshops, activities, and open ritual. UU Church, off Abbott Road behind the Public Library.	*East Lansing, Michigan*	Delta@acd.net, or (517) 339-2796
Witchcraft 101 & 102	Contact sponsor	Weekly Meetings at Isle of Avalon, 412 E. Fourth Street	*Royal Oak, Michigan*	(248) 336-8228
Federation of Circles and Solitaries	Contact sponsor	The Downriver group, The Federation of Circles and Solitaries, holds seasonal rituals and weekly classes. "This is a very relaxed fellowship circle and a whole lot of fun." No alcohol, drugs, or weapons allowed at Federation events. Circles are held rain or shine. Classes must be paid for in advance, and openings are limited.	*South of Detroit, MI*	Greg @ (800) 312-3522 or see our web site www.FOCASMI.org
Circle of the Twelve Oaks	3rd Wed. 7-9 p.m.	Location varies, as do subjects. Circle of the Twelve Oaks.	*West of Detroit, MI*	brown_wren@hotmail.com

Weekly Events

Event	Day/Time	Description	Location	Contact
Earth Centered Traditions	2nd & 4th Mondays, 7 p.m.	Eclectic Pagan and Earth-centered spirituality group offering group study, workshops, activities, and open ritual. Unitarian Universalist Church, 855 Grove St. (off Abbott Road), behind the Public Library	East Lansing, MI	Delta@acd.net or (517) 339-2796.
Pagan Coffee Night	Tuesdays, 7 p.m.	Informal weekly discussion/networking/social/ support meetings. PO Box 614, Houghton MI 49913.	Houghton, MI	Hearth@mailcity.com http://pages.whowhere.com/community/hearth
Wiccan Journey	Wednesdays 7:30 p.m	A discussion group centered around exploring Wiccan ideas and beliefs. MSU Union	East Lansing, Michigan	Jason Mankey, solivictus@yahoo.com
Shamanic Journeys	Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.	Weekly trance-journeys to distant realms of the spirit for healing, divination, personal transformation. Inter-Cooperative Council Education Center, 1522 Hill St. (behind 1520). Please park on nearby side streets.	Ann Arbor, MI	(734) 665-3522 or e-mail jmm@cyberspace.org
Green Spiral	Every other Wednesday.	Green Spiral is a discussion and networking group for Pagan students at Michigan State and folks in the surrounding Lansing area. We welcome people of all ages and stages of learning. Meetings are every other Wednesday, year-round. Visit our web site or drop us an email for more information!	East Lansing, Michigan	Pagan@pilot.msu.edu http://www.msu.edu/~pagan/
Pagan Chat Nights	Thursdays 7:30 p.m.	Federation of Circles and Solitaries. An hour of mix and mingle, followed by an hour of discussion on a new topic each week Somethin's Brewin', 15371 Dix-Toledo Road	Southgate, Michigan	Greg @ (800) 312-3522 or www.FOCASMI.org
Open Grove Society	Every Other Thursday, 8 p.m.	We are a pagan organization on the campus of Central Michigan University. We hold at least one workshop per month on various topics. *Central Michigan University*, Amspach Hall, Rm. 157.	Mt. Pleasant, Michigan	Panthera333@moonshinehollow.com

Crystal Treasures Workshops	Fridays, 7 p.m	Discuss the topics you want to discuss with like-minded individuals. 104 W. Walton Blvd.	*Pontiac, Michigan.,*	Crystreasur@aol.com (148) 335-1405.
Monthly Gathering	Sundays 2-4 p.m.	E-Groups meet for discussion. Denny's, 715 44th St. SW at US-131, Wyoming MI 49509. Sanctuary of the Silver Moon.	*Grand Rapids*	Grsotsm@yahoogroups.com
Wiccan Church of Canada	Sundays 8 P.M.	Public rituals at 100 Vaughan Road. Classes every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Newsletter available at Sabbats.	*Toronto, Ontario*	(416) 656-6564.

Monthly Events

Event	Day/Time	Description	Location	Contact
Coffee Hour	July 4 6-9 p.m.	Pagan social hour. First Sunday of every month. Java Hutt Café, 165 West Nine Mile Road. Magical Education Council	*Ferndale, Michigan.*	JM04970872@cs.com
Meet and Greet	July 2 8-9 p.m.	Meets on the first Friday of every month at Borders Book Shop, off Novi Road, just south of I-96. We have a general social gathering for all interested. Free. Circle of the Twelve Oaks.	*Novi, Michigan*	brown_wren@hotmail.com
The Pagan Roundtable	July 6 7:00 p.m.	Discussions and Networking for Witches, Druids, Magicians, and other assorted Pagans. First Tuesday of every month. Mt. Clemens Public Library, 150 Cass Avenue, Downstairs in the Community Room.	*Mt. Clemens, Michigan*	Arwen at StarEnd@aol.com. Please put Pagan Roundtable in your subject line.
Moon Mist Rising Full Moon Celebration	July 2, 31 6:30 pm	Celebrate full moons with Moon Mist Rising at Bentmore Farm, 3655 West 32 Mile Road. Access via Rochester Road to 32 Mile, then east to Dequindre, south to Predmore, east to Farm or via Van Dyke, going west past Mound one mile. Call to confirm; bring folding chairs, bug spray, cover-ups, and a finger food snack to share.	*Predmore, MI*	Caridwyn 586 781-6403 Brian 586 752-2022
Full Moon Gatherings	July 2, 31 6:30 - 9 p.m.	Our group intention is to practice our learnings and share our teachings with others to enhance our community. Participate in rituals from a variety of traditions. .	*Ann Arbor, Michigan*	Valerie at Designwitch@earthlink.net
Full Moon Ritual	July 2, 31	Ritual begins promptly at 7 p.m. Our circles are small and limited to 12 participants. Those interested should contact the HPS.	*Ann Arbor, Michigan*	Http://home.earthlink.net/~nal
Druidic Coffee Hour	July 23 7 - 9 p.m.	A time to get together with friends and discuss topics of interest to us all. All welcome. Borders Books, 3527 Washtenaw.	*Ann Arbor, Michigan*	www.msen.com/~robh/slg/
SEMPA Chat	Tuesdays 7-10 p.m.	Coffee and chat night, hosted by Southeast Michigan Pagan Alliance. At Maplewood Community Center	*Garden City, Michigan*	tiogg@twmi.rr.com

Women's Full Moon Ritual	June 3 7:00-10:00 p.m.	Attune with the moon and make some magick with the women of 7 Gen. This month's ritual honors The Morrigan. Seven Generations, 1910 Hill St. (basement) www.sacredpath.org/7gencc Bring friends! $2 donation.	*Ann Arbor, MI*	paulasteele@comcast.net or (734) 904-1168
New Moon Movie Night	Sat. July 2 8-11 p.m.	Enjoy a featured movie on a big 8' screen. Popcorn and pop, or bring your own non alcoholic beverage. Seven Generations. Non-members $3. 1910 Hill St. (basement)..This month: Peter Pan.	*Ann Arbor, MI*	paulasteele@comcast.net or (734) 904-1168
Women's Full Moon Ritual	July 2, 31 7 - 10 p.m.	Attune with the moon and make some magick with the women of 7 Generations. Each month explores a different Goddess. 1910 Hill St. (basement). $2 donation.	*Ann Arbor, MI*	paulasteele@comcast.net (734) 904-1168
Kabbalah Centre	Sun. July 11 and 25 1-3 p.m.	Discuss teachings of the Kabbalah Centre International, based on the weekly Zohar section. All welcome. Seven Generations, 1910 Hill St. (basement). Small donation.	*Ann Arbor, MI*	Michaael Wilkin mcdike@med.umich.edu
Magickal Hair Beading	July 6 8-11 p.m.	Learn hair beading with magickal intent under the full moon. Women only. $3 donation. Seven Generations, 1910 Hill St. (basement). Please call to pre-register. $3 donation. Www.sacredpath.org/7gencc	*Ann Arbor, MI*	paulasteele@comcast.net (734) 904-1168

Special Events

Event	Day/Time	Description	Location	Contact
Pan Pagan Festival	August 4-8	Rituals, Workshops, Candlelight Labyrinth, Pagan Follies, and much else. Midwest Pagan Council.	*North-Central Indiana*	www.midwestpagancouncil.org
Spirits of the Earth Festival	July 6-11	Bands, authors, 100+ workshops, daily rituals in many traditions, drumming circles, and much else.	*Near London, Ontario*	www.spiritsfest.com
Druidic Lughnasadh Festival	Saturday, August 7	Our annual tradition! Join us for a day of ritual, workshops, food, and the Championship Games. All welcome. 11 a.m.- 9 p.m., Gallup Park, 3000 Fuller Road. Shining Lakes Grove Druidic group.	*Ann Arbor, Michigan*	www.msen.com/~robh/slg
Lunacy Women's Week	July 10-17	The Moon and the Divine Feminine. Intuition, divination, and listening to the song of life. Workshops, rituals, and much else. Diana's Grove in Central Missouri.	*Salem, Missouri*	www.dianasgrove.com PO Box 159, Salem MO 65560 573-680-2400